



## I. Political Alignment

### **The goal of the activity**

The goal of the following activity is to introduce students to the concept of political alignment. Students will learn fundamental vocabulary that will allow them to better participate in political discussions in the proceeding lesson parts. To make the lesson material more applicable, students will practice characterizing the political alignment of their own nation's government and identifying characteristics of each political party. This will present opportunities for students of different nationalities to analyze and compare the party alignment of their respective countries.

### **Suitable participants**

As the first lesson part is introductory in nature, it is most suitable for high school students from the age of 14 or 15 till the age of 19 who might have some prior knowledge of politics. Older students may require less background, making it possible to skip to part II of the lesson plan.

### **The duration of the activity**

The recommended duration of the activity is 30-45 minutes. As this is an introductory activity, it should take less than 60 minutes.

### **Tools and materials**

Suggested apps to use: Canva or Whiteboard.

This activity is primarily discussion-based, but the teacher should prepare a means to display the political alignment chart contained in this lesson as well as to display students' contributions to the class.



# DEBATE NOT ARGUE

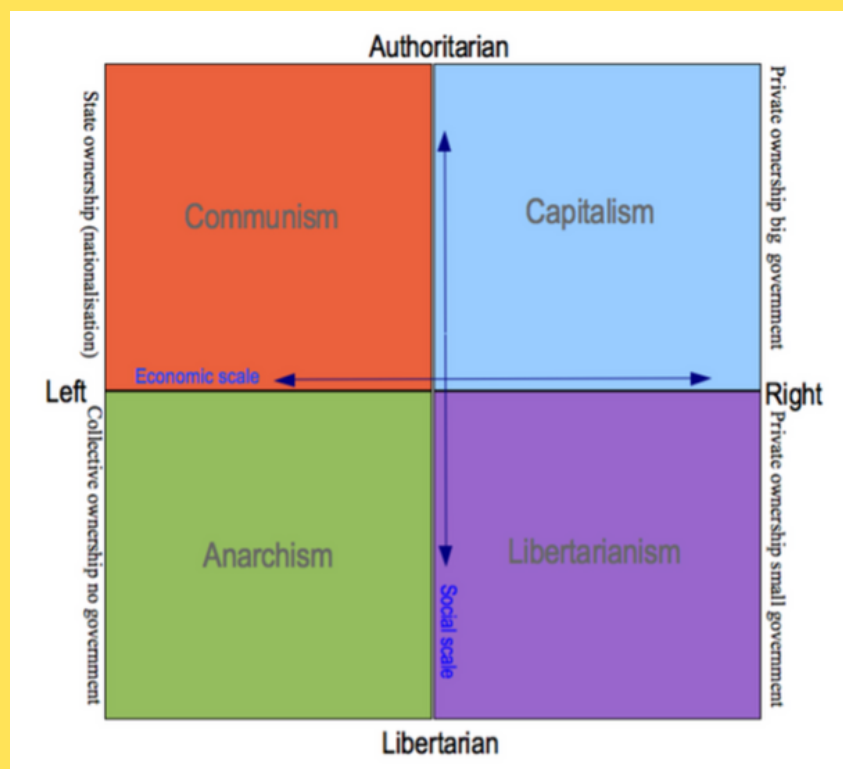
## I. Political Alignment

### Introduction

To begin this three-part lesson, the teacher should ask students what initial expectations they have and what they hope to gain from the lesson. The teacher should explain that the lesson will be an opportunity for discussion rather than merely a lecture and that each student can feel comfortable sharing their perspectives with the class.

To introduce the lesson topic, the teacher will pose the question, "what is your first political memory?" The teacher can provide an anecdotal example of their own first encounter with political events or with terminology such as "left" or "right". Then, students will have an opportunity to share how or when they first became aware of politics.

From here, the teacher can explain to students that politics is likely much more nuanced than their first encounters with the topic. They will share that this lesson will help students' become acquainted with the terms that are used to describe different political perspectives or ideologies. Using **Canva** or **Whiteboard**, the teacher will present the following graphic to the class:

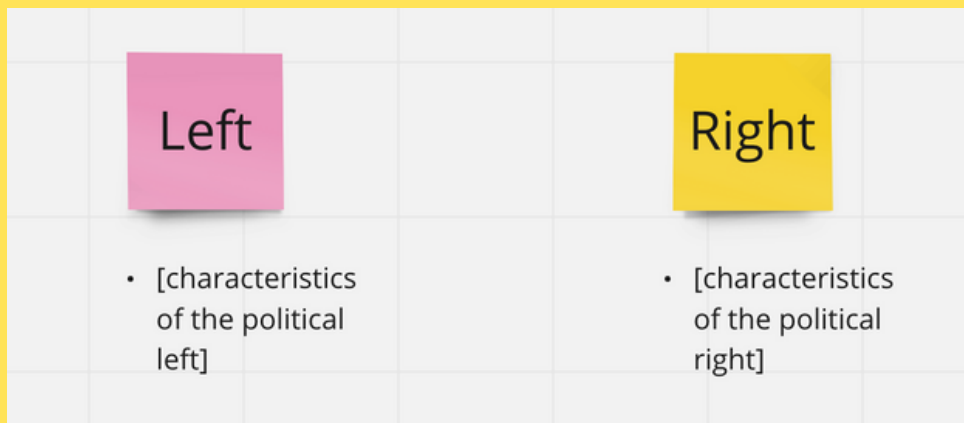




# DEBATE NOT ARGUE

## I. Political Alignment

Dividing the class into small groups or pairs, the teacher will begin by asking the class to brainstorm everything they know about the political "left" and "right". After sufficient time to work, the teacher will collect students' ideas on **Web Whiteboard**, commenting or explaining items as necessary. The teacher will then repeat the process, asking students to discuss the difference between "authoritarian" and "libertarian".



### Application

In this section, students will apply their new knowledge of the political spectrum by categorizing their country's government and political parties.

The teacher will present the following questions:

- In which square of the chart is your government located?
- Can you think of a country with the opposite political alignment?
- What political parties fit each category?

Students will have the opportunity to draw their own political alignment chart (either physically or digitally) and assign each government or party to their respective square.

If you have a multinational group, encourage the students to think critically about their own governments and later explain what they know about each of the parties to their classmates who are not familiar with it.





# DEBATE NOT ARGUE

## I. Political Alignment

### **Optional: More practice**

If the students need more practice to understand the concept of political alignment, the teacher can add this supplemental activity to help students think from others' perspectives.

First, the teacher will have students brainstorm a short list of current political topics. Then, the class will practice addressing each issue from the perspective of a different political ideology. For example, if the issue is environmental protection, students will discuss how the political left would approach this issue compared to the political right.

It is possible to split the class into small groups for this activity or to use it as an opportunity for class-wide discussion.





## **II. Politics & Social Media**

### **The goal of the activity**

The goal of the following activity is to show students how the media they are consuming might be manipulated, fake, or simply present underresearched, even false information. The students will learn how to fact-check certain types of media. In the second part of the lesson, students will learn how the media content they share on their social platforms might influence them or the people around them, understanding the power of social media.

### **Suitable participants**

The materials are most suitable for high school students from the age of 14 or 15 till the age of 19. However, the activity can be suitable for youth up to the age of 30. They might have some prior knowledge of politics.

### **The duration of the activity**

The recommended duration of the activity is 60 - 80 minutes. It should not take longer than 90 minutes.

### **Tools and materials**

Suggested apps to use: Ahaslides, Kahoot, Miro, Canva or Whiteboard.

While it is also possible to use a regular whiteboard, content from apps is more easily shareable and can be saved.

The teacher should prepare a presentation of statements and ways on how to fact-check them.



# DEBATE NOT ARGUE

## II. Politics & Social Media

### Introduction

The teacher will prepare 5 statements by politicians. These can be either false statements (fake news), true and correct statements, or a mix of both. The statements could be an article in a newspaper, a tweet, billboards, or even a short video from a TV programme.

#### Kyiv's clubs and bars to stay open later as curfew relaxed to midnight

Ukraine's capital trying to return to new normal after Russian invasion, with latest move hoped to boost business



Donald J. Trump  
@realDonaldTrump

Follow

Afterwards, the teacher asks the students to decide whether these examples are true, or whether they are fake news, based purely on the students gut feelings.

This should be the topic of a debate, the teacher can ask multiple students directly or use apps such as **Kahoot**, **Miro** or **Ahaslides** to make the students decide anonymously. This way the teacher can see the percentages.

Afterwards, the teacher reveals which statements were true and which were false. A discussion on strategies of politicians, fake news and fake posts should follow.

Important questions:

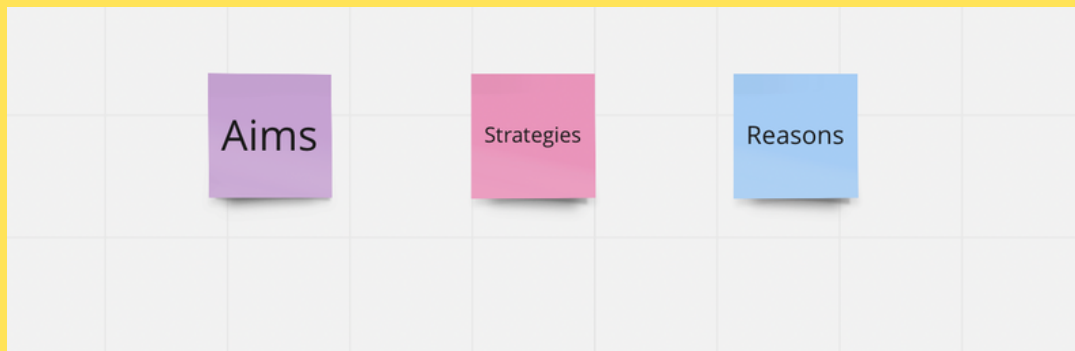
- Why are politicians doing this?
- What are their aims?
- What are their strategies?



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The teacher will note the ideas and opinions expressed during the discussion – using a blackboard, an online tool, or a mind-map.

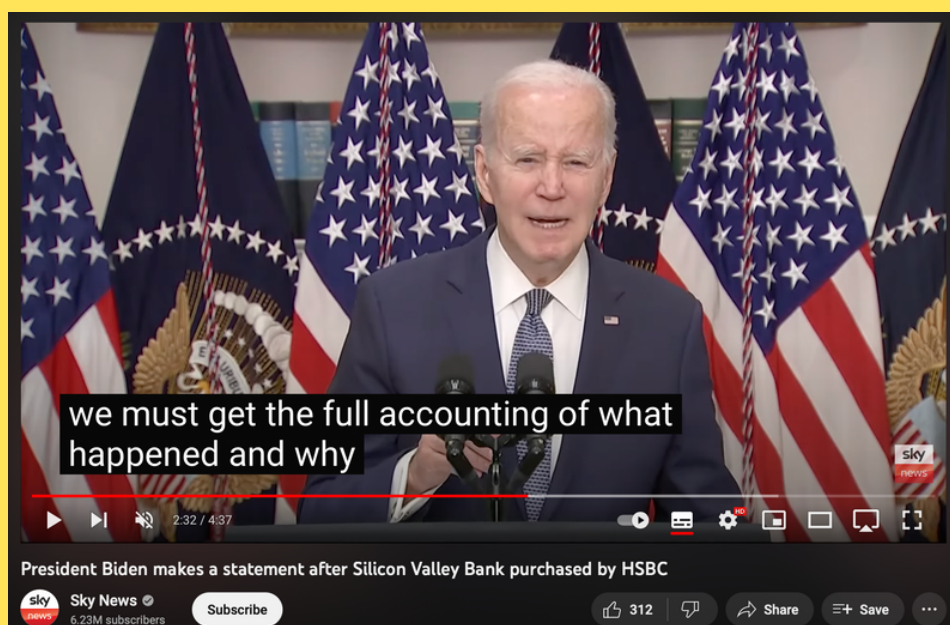
The teachers can use tools such as **Miro**, **Canva**, or **Web whiteboard**



Afterwards the teacher will present sources and different ways to check the veracity of statements, and provide lists of independent media. Some examples:

- International: politifact, FactCheck.org, Snopes
- CZ: demagog.cz
- PL: demagog.org.pl, fakenews.pl
- DE: dpa.com/de/faktencheck, correctiv.org/faktencheck/
- BEL: factcheck.vlaanderen

Afterward the teacher will present one more statement and then let the students test it with their new sources (in the lesson, on their phone/pc/tablet).





## Awareness of what you are sharing: Social media is powerful.

In another section, the teacher should present the following quote to the class:

***There are no weapons stronger than words***

Afterwards, the teacher uses the Think-Pair-Share method and asks the students what they first THINK about the quote. After each student thinks about their opinion, they PAIR with a nearby student and SHARE their opinions on what the quote might mean, what they thought of when they read the quote, and so on.

Once each group is done sharing, they present their ideas. The teacher notes those ideas on a whiteboard. It is also possible to create a mind-map. The teacher can once again use **Canva**, **EdrawMind** etc.

After this segment, the teacher presents some crucial questions to the class:

- Do you remember the first time you realized that social media is powerful?
- What are your experiences?

Afterwards, the teacher presents examples of situations in which internet users were persecuted in real life for what things they were sharing on social media.

### **Muslim vyhnán ze skotského města kvůli obhajobě útoků v Manchesteru**

Muslimský kazatel Hamza Siddiq ze Skotska, který se narodil jako Andrew Calladin, byl ze svého rodného skotského města údajně vyhozen poté, co se místní obyvatelé naštváli kvůli jeho obhajobě manč  
„oprávněný.“ Mus

NBC NEWS

### **White student expelled from Howard University's law school sues alleging racial discrimination**

*The New York Times*

### ***After Racist Tweet, Roseanne Barr's Show Is Canceled by ABC***

## **Conclusion:**

**Think before you post**

**Think about what you consume**



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### **III. Social Media and Ownership**

#### **The goal of the activity**

The goal of the following activity is to help students understand the politics of media ownership and encourage them to think critically about their own social media use. They will have the opportunity to explore real-world examples of media owners and test their assumptions about media monopolies. Finally, students will put this knowledge into practice by testing the algorithm on their own social media accounts.

#### **Suitable participants**

The materials are most suitable for high school students from the age of 14 or 15 till the age of 19. However, the activity can be suitable for youth up to the age of 30. They might have some prior knowledge of politics.

#### **The duration of the activity**

The recommended duration of the activity is 60-90 minutes. The topics covered in this part of the lesson are likely more unfamiliar to students, so it may be beneficial to spend a bit of extra time on some parts (if necessary).

#### **Tools and materials**

Suggested apps to use: Canva or Whiteboard.

The teacher should prepare a means to display students' contributions to the class.

### III. Social Media and Ownership

#### Introduction

This lesson will begin with a brief discussion to transition from the topic of social media and politics to media ownership. You may start by asking students, "who owns social media?" This discussion can be used to gauge the students' level of prior knowledge on the topic and prepare them for the coming lesson.

#### Example: Meta

Start with one specific example of the technology company, *Meta*, to illustrate for students how media ownership works. Engage students in a discussion of this example by asking questions such as those listed here.

Questions to ask

- Do you know what Meta is?
- Which brands are part of Meta?
- What do you think is the purpose of Meta?

In response to these questions, sketch the following diagram. Explain to students what Meta is and describe Zuckerberg's vision for the company. You can find more information to answer these questions in the news article linked below.



Find more information on Zuckerberg's vision in this [article](#)



#### Skepticism, Confusion, Frustration: Inside Mark Zuckerberg's Metaverse Struggles (Published 2022)

By Ryan Mac, Sheera Frenkel and Kevin Roose October 9, 2022

Meta's push to develop virtual and augmented reality technology has



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### III. Social Media and Ownership

Next, test students on some facts concerning Meta. Encourage students to give their best estimates, but know that the purpose of the activity is to help students gauge how much reality differs from their assumptions about media ownership.

Have students record their estimates individually first. You may also give them an opportunity to discuss their estimates with a classmate or in a small group to see how their assumptions compare with other students'. Then, reveal the real answers!

Questions to ask

1. How many employees did Meta have in 2022? **86,482**
2. How many users did Meta have in 2022? **3.74 billion**
3. How high was their revenue in 2022? **\$116.609 billion**
4. Who owns Meta? **Mark Zuckerberg**
5. What is the stock market value of Meta? **505.48 billion**
6. How does Meta earn money? **By selling advertisement space**
7. What do you think is Meta's product? **You / app users**

After revealing the true numbers, have students reflect on any facts they found surprising. Ask them how these facts influence their evaluation of social media. Have them share with the class or discuss in small groups.

#### Example: Twitter

For more practice, you may opt to develop the example, *Twitter*, in a similar fashion and discuss it with the students. Below are some resources you may find useful in expanding this example.

See [this article](#) about changing ownership of Twitter:



### III. Social Media and Ownership

#### Game - The Algorithm

This game will help students understand how social media algorithms work by acting as one themselves. Students play by organizing images into different categories based on self-made criteria.

*But don't discuss the idea of the algorithm beforehand! Just give students the task and let them work for 10 to 15 minutes. Afterwards tell them "What you have done now is comparable to what an algorithm does."*

Game preparations:

- Print out 60 to 80 pictures. The pictures should be clearly categorizable. For example, 5 pictures of different dogs, 7 pictures of cats, 4 pictures of training equipment and so on.
- It would be beneficial to the analogy if you include some "ambiguous" pictures. For example, you could include 8 pictures of food but with 5 of them containing meat and 3 of them showing vegan recipes.
- If the participants should organize them in one category "food" you can discuss how the algorithm operates and that it would potentially block one of the two lifestyles out. It should be likely that you would either be in the "meat bubble" or in the "vegan bubble". You could further discuss with them what would fit the bubble (health, training, ...) and what should not. This should be a good way to discuss "bubbles" and "echo chambers" with them.



#### Post-game discussion

Invite students to comment on the following statement: "With social media it is possible to reach a broad audience; it is possible to share one's message with the whole world!"

Allow students to share their thoughts, and guide the discussion with the following points.

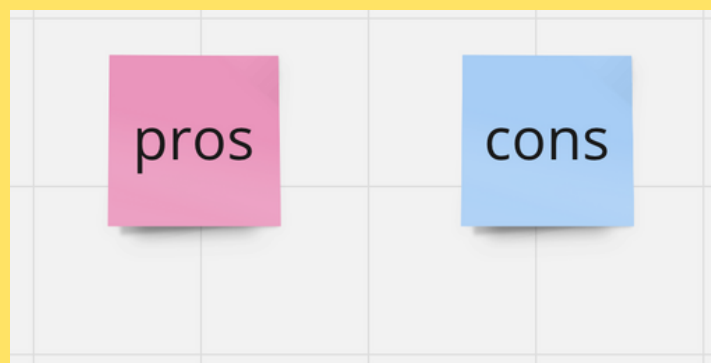
### III. Social Media and Ownership

1. There are 3.7 billion social media users. How many humans are living on our world right now? Not the whole world. Billions are excluded and have no access to social media!
2. If we operate in echo chambers then we are not able to reach the whole world. Our content will be categorized and preferably shown to those who share our opinions and interests. Hence, we can only hardly reach the ones we would like to reach with our messages.

#### **Social media: Advantages and risks**

Connect this part to the algorithm game. Use it as a wrap up and a way to develop implications from what the participants have experienced and learned so far.

Start by asking students what the pros and cons of social media are. Using web whiteboard or canva, collect students' responses.



Discuss consequences and implication of the algorithm with them.

- What can we do? How can we deal with it?
- What can you do differently now?

Optional: considering discussing how media owners decide the content users see

- What would happen if specific topics were blocked by whoever owns social media?
  - ex. "What would happen if I ban "cats" from your account?" You would never learn about cats. Maybe you wouldn't even know they exist!



### III. Social Media and Ownership

#### Social media: Self-experiment

Finally, the question arises "If social media is collecting my data and categorizes my interests to show me fitting content, which preferences are associated with my account and how would I look to the algorithm?"

1. Show them how to find their preferences in Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc. (let students pick one to focus on)
2. Have them identify the three most important preferences
3. Open DALL-e and insert their preferences to develop (3-5) pictures. Those pictures are (maybe) how the algorithm sees them.
  - a. *note: don't give them the link for DALL-e but show your account via the beamer in order to work in accordance with the data protection regulations!*
4. Show and discuss the different pictures!
  - a. Is that you?
  - b. What suits your interests and self-image?
  - c. Which preferences surprised you or didn't fit your self-image?
  - d. What are the consequences (for you and others) if the algorithm gets some preferences wrong

#### Wrap-up

- Ask each participant for one "take home message" they will remember from today. Ask them to express it in only a single sentence. This strict form could help to clear the multitude of information.
- Ask them further what we could do differently and what they really enjoyed from the workshop.



### III. Social Media and Ownership

- Ask them whether their expectations have been fulfilled and remove them from the wall one by one (see part I!)
- Close the workshop by thanking them for their time, investment and engagement. It is extraordinary to invest oneself in this topic. They are the society of tomorrow; they will shape the world, and they will influence the lives of others. Being sensitized for fake news and willing to counteract hate, lies and violence will contribute to making the world a more loving and connected place.